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# THE ATHENÆUM.

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*Necque cuiquam tam statim clarum ingenium est, ut possit emergere; nisi illi materia, occasio, fautor etiam, commendatorque contingat.*

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PLIN. EPIST.

## THE VAGRANT.

### No. XIV.

*Etiam sapientibus cupido famæ novissima exurit.*  
TACITUS.

Even by the wise the love of fame is the last passion overcome.

A PASSION, so universal as is the love of praise, must be wisely implanted in man; as an incentive to the study of wisdom and the practice of virtue. It cannot be reasonable to extinguish a motive to virtue so powerful and general, particularly in the most liberal and generous minds. To nurture and indulge it, within proper bounds, is contrary neither to reason nor religion.

But as the love of praise is natural to man, and given him, no doubt, for the wisest purposes, so, in order to produce its proper effects, it should receive that direction which will, ultimately, lead to its real gratification, true greatness. For this purpose, we are to draw the line of distinction between *eminence* and *true greatness*. That, the splendour of talents, and

the possession of power, may bestow: *this*, is inseparably associated with great abilities, joined to the performance of great actions, for the good of mankind, or for the welfare of our country. True greatness is the offspring of moral excellence, connected with those qualities that constitute the eminent, or illustrious character. Mankind may admire talents, heroism and military skill; they should respect office and authority; but they cannot, they will not, love, and inwardly venerate that man who employs these qualities only for the purposes of ambition. The objects of our real affection and secret reverence, are great achievements, undertaken and completed with the purest motives.

Alexander and Cæsar are admired, because they possessed splendid abilities, surmounted great difficulties, and dazzle us with the brightness of their exploits. But they have no true glory: "theirs was an impious greatness, and mixed with too much horror to be envied."

Though the love of fame be disseminated through all the human race, it finds the kindest reception in the bosoms of those most distinguished for liberality of sentiment, and for a generous and benevolent conduct. On minds of this cast, it operates with peculiar energy and vigour. Tully does not scruple to acknowledge, that a regard to the opinion of his contemporaries, and his future fame, had a constant and salutary influence on the tenour of his conduct. "Can you suppose," says Cato, in the beautiful treatise of old age, "if I had thought my fame would be terminated by the same limits that bound my existence here on earth, that my days and nights would have been devoted to the service and good of my country? Had such been my opinion, a life of ease had, certainly, been preferable to the bustle and noise of business." In truth, I cannot but persuade myself, that the greatest and best men the world ever saw, have been more or less influenced by the opinion of their contemporaries, and a regard to posterity.

A stoic might pretend to an entire insensibility to praise; but, surely, his situation was by no means enviable. That was a cold and comfortless philosophy, which taught its votaries to hear with equal apathy, the applause and the censure of mankind. While the latter may lead to the correction of our errors, and the detection of those foibles which the warmth of friendship would not reveal, the former directs to the performance of great and good actions, as the surest and most effectual way to obtain it.

The best rule for the regulation of our desire of praise, is, to indulge it where there is no criminality. Be-

yond that, it is pernicious. Thus restrained, it is the source of numerous benefits to mankind.

It operates in a two fold way; first, by urging to the performance of those actions that shall justly entitle us to praise; and secondly, by producing vigilance to support, by a correspondent conduct, that reputation we have acquired. He who has much to lose will be more circumspect in watching over it. The man of established reputation will be impelled to preserve it by the same passion that caused its acquisition. It will hinder him from the perpetration of any thing low and base, by which it might be sullied. But the wretch, who neither fears God nor man, has advanced so far in iniquity and corruption, that he finds it easier to go forwards than to return. Beings of this class are prepared for any act, however desperate and wicked. They have nothing to lose, and something possibly they may gain. But the contrary is true of him who suitably regards his reputation, and the good opinion of mankind.

At no period of our age does the love of praise glow with greater ardour than in youth. And if tempered with virtue it is a presage of rising merit and future distinction.—If, at a season when the heart beats with generous emotions and is alive to every noble sentiment, an equal disregard for the applause and censure of mankind be manifested, there is nothing to hope above the groveling pursuits of avarice and selfishness. In the spring time of life, before experience has blasted our opening prospects, it is natural to look forward with confidence, and start on the career of life, with a virtuous emulation to rise in its pur-



suits. It belongs to age, hackneyed in the ways of the world, and taught by sad experience the emptiness and vanity, of its pursuits and pleasures, to turn from fame with indifference and hear censure without emotion. But in the young, is expected more ardour of feeling and a greater regard to the opinion of the world. Yet there is danger lest those who possess it may be too much under its influence. It has been remarked that the love of distinction is often found strongest in the most enlarged and liberal minds; and it is equally true that such minds are not unfrequently led astray from the path of duty and rectitude while in pursuit of that distinction which they have in prospect.

The inference which I would derive from these remarks is, that while the love of praise is directed to worthy objects, it is beneficial; but, as it may also lead into great errors, it is to be watched cautiously lest it gain too great an ascendant over the mind.

#### ON A DISPUTATIOUS CHARACTER.

"Tis folly only, and defect of sense,  
"Turns trifles into things of consequence."

IT is unnecessary to dwell at this time upon the pleasures of social intercourse. They have already been too frequently and ably delineated, and their influence too deeply felt, not to be acknowledged at their first mention. It is allowed by all, that they constitute a great portion of the whole sum of human happiness.—We feel, it is true, much interested in public affairs and justly rejoice at national prosperity. The happiness we derive from such sources, is in itself undoubtedly great; but it loses much of its importance when com-

pared to the felicity of the fireside—to the enjoyments of the domestic circle. These are more exquisite—they interest our tenderest affections and come directly home to the heart. Whatever, therefore, tends to destroy this happiness, should by all means be avoided. Towards accomplishing this, I know of nothing that goes farther, than what is commonly termed, a *disputatious disposition*.

To point out a few of the effects of such a disposition, upon the associates of the man who is the subject of it, and also some of those consequences which are confined to himself, is now my design.

In every innocent observation made in his presence, he raises his ingenuity to discover some flaw—some doubtful principle, which he may dispute—some point, which he may successfully contest—some trifling error, in the thought or language, in the correction of which, his own knowledge may be shown, and the ignorance of his companion manifested. He speaks not to please or inform, but to gain a victory, and thus gratify his pride. This obtained, no matter at what expense, even by the loss of his best friend, he feels fully satisfied. Think, I beseech you, how great a share of the happiness, usually enjoyed in rational conversation, must be destroyed, and how much misery occasioned, by the continual presence of a spirit like this. All the easy, innocent and lively remarks, which characterize the familiar circle, flee at his approach, and in their room is substituted a train of ill-natured observations, which serve only to excite animosity and create petty, yet *boisterous* contentions. Or, if this is not the case; if there be peace; if there be tran-

quility—it is the gloomy, hateful *tranquility*, which proceeds from fear—a *tranquility* not unlike that which prevades the sheep-fold at the approach of the wolf.

You need not be informed how exactly fitted the conversation of such a man, is to torment those who happen to fall in his company, and how widely different from that which is calculated to please and instruct. But while we thus severely reprobate a disputatious disposition, we should be careful lest we run into the opposite extreme. The person, who indiscriminately assents to every thing that is said, and the character above described, are equally distant from that which is calculated for the pleasures of the domestic circle. Conversation often needs the inspiring, inspiriting No to brush its surface and give life to the whole. Without this, it flags—it becomes flat and insipid—it loses its spirit—its real essence. In the one case, it resembles the dull, lifeless pool—in the other, the easy gliding stream, with its surface at times gently ruffled by the welcome and salutary breeze.

It will perhaps now be of service to contemplate some of the consequences, which terminate in the person, who is the victim of this unhappy temper. One, and certainly not the least of these, is found in the entire want of influence over the conduct of those around him, admitting him to be possessed of those qualities which procure it in ordinary cases. In order to make men pursue a certain course of conduct, you are to convince them of its utility. But before you convince, you must persuade them—you must interest their feelings—you must gain their affections. But how badly calculated for this purpose is a man of a disputa-

tious disposition! would not his advice tend to dissuade you from any given purpose, rather than confirm you in its pursuit? And do we not always find that those, who have the most influence over others—those, whose counsel is most effectual, are men of easy, unassuming tempers, the subjects of reason, and not the creatures of passion? And for this obvious cause, when a person, apparently under the control of passion, addresses us; we suspect him—we begin to think he has some private end to answer—some selfish design to accomplish. But when addressed on the other hand, with coolness and moderation, which ordinarily characterize those, who are governed by Reason, we are prepossessed in the person's favour—we fall in with his conclusions, as dictated by a sense of their utility and importance.

But a disputatious man is also generally destitute of friends; and indeed how is it possible that the case should be otherwise? Friendship is the union of kindred souls. But, permit me to ask, how could two such characters ever enter into terms of permanent friendship? Or, granting this done, how long would their ungovernable impetuosity suffer these terms to continue unviolated? Nay, would they survive even a single meeting of the parties, after union? If they did, it would certainly be something extraordinary, and, I had almost said, miraculous. True and lasting friendship must moreover be based upon the mutual esteem and respect of the parties. But where one of the parties is a disputatious man, how, it may be justly inquired, can this respect and esteem for him, possibly exist? Experience tells us that persons of this character, instead



of being esteemed and respected, by their companions, are, to some, objects of pity; to others, of contempt; and to all, the sources of much unhappiness. The disputatious man is also, of consequence, utterly destitute of good breeding—this is the very essence of his character. His whole conversation is generally a continued train of infringements of the most obvious dictates of common politeness, and sometimes, of common sense. To prefer others to himself even in trifles, (which is said to be the great thing in polite intercourse,) is far from being one of his standing rules of conduct. But were we, on the other hand, to estimate his principles by his practice, we should suppose it to be his prime object to insult and abuse—to embitter the life of his fellow creatures—not to increase their happiness.

Were the disputatious man to contrast the continual turmoil and want of tranquillity, which always attend this temper of mind, with the peace and quiet he might enjoy, without the surrender of any present good—were he to reflect on his want of respect—of esteem—of friends—of influence, and consequently of the means of doing good, even were he so disposed—were he properly to estimate the misery he brings upon his nearest connexions, persons to whom it should be his endeavour to be a continual benefactor—were he, I say, to weigh all these considerations, and become even partially sensible of the importance of each; he would, one would think, soon relinquish a course of conduct attended by so few good, and so many evil consequences.

L. N. P.

FOR THE ATHENÆUM.

*“Go, (said the Chancellor Oxeński to his son, when he was sending him to a congress of ambassadors, and when the young man was expressing his diffidence of his own abilities for such an employment,) Go, and see with your own eyes—Quam parva sapientia regitur mundus.”*

*As quoted by Stewart.*

IT is amusing to see historians, on every occasion, torturing their inventions to discover great causes for great events; as if a war could not be made, or a nation's honour and interest sacrificed, without a sufficient reason. Surely each in his own case, must forget the lesson taught by his predecessors, or he would often be willing to account for the most signal transactions upon very trivial causes. The servant of Sylla could have laughed at the elaborate account given by historians for the abdication of all power by the tyrant. He, perhaps, saw the real cause of this singular conduct; and saw it to be much more trivial than they ever dreamed of. And had Charles V. given the true reason of his withdrawing from power, it would, no doubt, have surprised those who were looking very far for the causes of that incident. Great would, doubtless, be our surprise, if the true reasons for those memorable transactions were laid open. We should wonder to see from what trivial causes arise the greatest events.

I have said that those historians, who search so deep, on every occasion, for the causes of human action, must forget the lessons taught by experience. One would think that facts already recorded, would be enough to put this prying spirit to silence.

Pliny, the historian, says, that the social war had its rise in a private quarrel between Livius Drusus and Cæpo, about a ring under sale, for which they bid against one another. The sale of Dunkirk was, no doubt, regarded by many, as a measure of deep policy; but is now known to have been made to satisfy the extravagance and profligacy of Charles II. That great general, the duke of Marlborough, was dismissed by Queen Ann, because his duchess had refused to the favourite a pair of gloves; and this silly and contemptible conduct was followed by a no less consequence than the termination of the war. So true is the maxim of Rochefoucault, "that great actions, the lustre of which dazzles us, and which are represented by politicians as the effects of deep design, are often the effects of caprice and passion."

These remarks, when applied to the events of a particular nation, must be modified by the consideration of the government which it possesses. Where absolute power is placed in the hands of a single individual, there is the widest scope for the workings of whim or passion. Under such a government, the most important events, if traced to their true source, would be found to originate in the private pique of the monarch, in the persuasions of a mistress, the advice of an interested minister, or in some other cause equally contemptible and unworthy. Where more liberty is enjoyed, men will use the right of calling on their rulers for other reasons than those of private hatred or affection, before they engage in the support of a great enterprise, either for conquest, or the extension of power. And it must

be reckoned a very great advantage of a free government, that it is less liable to be involved in war, upon trivial and insufficient causes.

### PREJUDICE.

[Continued from No. 10.]

ANOTHER advantage arising from the prevalence of this passion, is, that it renders men, who, either from the want of leisure or abilities, are incapable of investigation, the zealous defenders of truths, of which, by other means, they could not have been convinced. I am sensible that this prepossession will not be very palatable, at present, when it is fashionable to decry the influence of prejudice, and when, in the zeal to be emancipated from its chains, and blot out the impressions of education from the mind, falsehoods, invented by ourselves, are preferred to truths, inculcated by our progenitors. But still, it should be remembered, that it is as possible that truth should be hereditary, as that the present age should be the only age of impartiality and wisdom. I would not imbibe an error, because it was taught by an instructor; but much less would I reject a truth, because I cannot claim the honour of discovering it myself.

Let it not be supposed, however, that I would insinuate, that prejudice finds a place as a pillar in the edifice of true religion, or that its important truths owe any of their support to bigotry, superstition, or any other propensity that perverts the mind. The christian has nothing to fear from enquiry, from improvement, or the decisions of reason. He is a child of the light, and fears not to come to the light. But while the bosom of man remains the recepta-



ele of evil passions—whilst he wanders in his own benighted state of sin, unable to find the way by his own discretion, it may be for his interest, sometimes, to submit to be led by another, whose perception is clear, that, at last, by the blessing of God, he may be able to direct himself.

Since, therefore, prejudice can be made useful, and is, sometimes, salutary, both to its possessor and society, let us endeavour, where it cannot be exterminated, to mould and guide it into usefulness. It is related of the Mexicans, that they had the art of converting a poisonous herb into a nourishing article of food. Prejudice, nurtured and inflamed, will do much evil; but, guided by a skilful hand, may be made subservient to important ends. We cannot make ignorant men wise, illiterate ones learned, or passionate ones impartial. But we can guide the ignorant by skill, inform the illiterate by our instructions, and soften the passionate by condescension. To use these faculties over the inferior ranks of society, without abusing them, is the highest praise of the philosopher, and of the man of wisdom. It is a duty which he owes the world; and he has as an incentive, to stimulate him in his endeavours, that if he cannot make men wise in intellect, he can make them regular in practice—if they will not be virtuous from principle, they may be made decent by habit.

## POETRY.

## THE RETURN.

WELCOME, embowering shades,  
Sweet shrubs and hallowed glades—  
But whence this change, this cold and cheerless  
hue?

In spring how gay ye smil'd,  
So fragrant and so mild,  
Who would have thought pale autumn would  
pursue?

Where is your foliage flown?  
Where are your ivies strewn?  
The wintry blast has roughly touch'd your stalks;  
Red are the oaks with grief,  
The poplar's golden leaf  
Flies through the air or rustles in our walks.

Where is the blushing rose,  
That did its sweets disclose,  
And to the radiant morn its charms unbind?

The bee returns no more  
To ask his daily store,  
Its faded leaves are scattered by the wind.

Hark! in the shady grounds,  
The woodman's axe resounds;  
Huge logs and scattered faggots fill the path;  
His spouse the burden bears,  
The lightest of her cares,  
To warm the little troop that shivers on the  
hearth.

See, on yon aged stump,  
The loaded squirrel jump;  
He carries acorns for his future fare;  
Who told thee storms would rise,  
Thou provident and wise?  
Who bade thee thus for wintry blasts prepare?

Thou hast a guardian God,  
Within this little wood,  
Who bids for thee, the pregnant branches bend:  
Yes, little as thou art,  
His bounty glads thy heart;  
And has not man a guardian and a friend?

ACADEMICUS.

## A BALLAD.

## FOUNDED ON FACT.

1. 'T WAS night, and the darkness of Egypt hung  
round,  
And the winds howl'd like shrieks of despair!  
Earl Richard all silently mark'd every sound,  
That sigh'd on the dank midnight air.

2. He thought that, in accents impressive and low,  
A hollow voice stole on his ear;

“Earl Richard, afar to the *tombs*—thou must go,  
“Ere the beams of the morning appear.”

3. His groom is commanded to saddle his steed;  
With armour himself he is *dight*.

Ah! well did the Earl *all* his fortitude need,  
To meet the dire scenes of that night.

4. O'er mountains and vallies he rapidly hied,  
And still spur'd his palfrey so fleet;  
For the groans on the breezes that mournfully  
sigh'd,  
Shriek'd “Speed, or thy death-angel meet.”

5. At length, all bedew'd with the vapours of  
night,  
His palfrey all streaming with foam;  
On a moor's dreary borders alighted the knight,  
Ten dark, tedious furlongs from home.

6. A darkling pine forest frown'd over the scene,  
Its foliage sigh'd sad in the wind;  
And the shrieks of the owl, where the murd'rer  
had been,  
Sunk deep in the Earl's boding mind.

7. But a voice still exclaim'd to the terrified  
knight,  
That his mission was yet unfulfill'd;  
And he winds his dark course through the wood's  
double night,  
Till he reaches a desolate wild.

8. The place, e'en at noon-tide, was gloomy and  
lone,  
For the sun shrunk aghast at the scene;  
And his shivering rays glanc'd from ev'ry cold  
stone,  
Or shed a pale glimmering sheen.

9. 'Twas a region of death, and the tomb-stones  
of white  
Flung their hue on his colorless cheek;  
So *palely* they gleam'd through the vapours of  
night.  
He falter'd—his bosom beat quick.

10. His steed he releas'd, and the gauntlet applied,  
To urge him to range o'er the ground;  
With clattering hoofs, the steed rapidly hied,  
But snorting returns with a bound.

11. E'en the steed's fearless spirit, so reckless of  
woe,  
Was chill'd by the shivering sight.  
Ah! how then can reason's child venture to go,  
Where *instinct* recoils with affright?

12. He shudders with dread, but the cold hollow  
voice  
Still sounds in his terrified ear—  
“Sir Knight, the cold windbag-sheet fixes your  
choice,  
“Unless you will still persevere.”

13. The knight presses forward and glides 'mong  
the tombs,  
Half dead with conflicting affright;  
When at once, in the midst of these multiplied  
glooms,  
A spectre appears in his sight.

14. A tall, thin, pale figure, enshrouded in white,  
Frown'd ghastly and grisly as death;  
Its vivid hue seen by a feeble, blue light,  
And it heav'd a deep sigh ev'ry breath.

15. The knight's glassy eyes in their sockets wild  
roll'd  
O'er the terrible sprite of the tomb;  
And the blood in his veins, while it curdled, grew  
cold,  
And the graves seem'd to yawn for his doom.

16. At length, in a transport of terror, he cries,  
“Good Spirit! what doest thou here?”  
No accent the withering spectre replies,  
But heaves a deep sigh with a tear.

17. Again, and again, the knight anxious repeats,  
“Good spirit! what doest thou here?”  
A sigh is the only reply which he meets—  
Desperation dismisses his fear.

18. He seizes the form in a frenzy of pain,  
And it sinks like a corse in his arms;  
“O! heavens!” he cries, “’tis Amelia—how vain  
“Were my groundless, my childish alarms!”

19. To the grave of her babe, she had wander'd to  
weep;  
Her reason, sad mourner! had fled;  
And here she delighted her vigils to keep,  
’Mid the silent abodes of the dead.

20. His errand he found was—the lost to restore;  
And he bore the sad wanderer home.  
Her friends on her woes balmy sympathy pour,  
And her senses their empire resume.

ELVER.

### EPIGRAM.

A *Spaniel* DOG :—The more you whip him, the  
better he likes you.

### EVERY BODY.

A COMMON culprit—master Jack—  
Would be quite sparing of his back :  
Your hide must be amazing tough,  
Since seven smart Lashes a'n't enough.

### NEW-HAVEN:

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